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ABSTRACT

The history of the school choice idea is briefly traced, and then some contemporary family choice models are examined in detail. "Tracking" was the major choice mechanism in public schools prior to recent efforts to expand the options. The alternative movement within individual schools began in the late 1960's, with many forms institutionalized in diverse ways, followed by programs of choice for entire school systems. Choices among the educational components of curriculum and content, instructional methods, and teachers are limited by logical, ideological, political, and professional considerations. However, the choice arrangement evidenced in schools or units within schools has flourished. Selected from 36 categories and subcategories of family choice models for detailed examination are the following school types: open enrollment, magnet schools, schools-within-schools, minischools, satellites and separate alternatives, and interdistrict choice plans. Concluding comments point out that neither localized alternatives nor those in an alternative system are without disadvantages. Another concern is that the exit option may make overall improvement within the deserted institution less likely. However, for the benefit of all students, alternatives and options in schools offer the best hopes for educational improvement. A 79-item bibliography is appended. (MLF)

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FAMILY CHOICE ARRANGEMENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

Choice schemes have proliferated within public education over the past dozen years. Major contributing factors include:

- The perception that parents have very little -- and less and less -- to say about the education of their children.
- The fact that over the years, control of schools has moved increasingly in the direction of central district offices, states, the federal government, and "ancillary structures" (Wayland, 1964) such as textbook publishers, testing services, and accreditation agencies.
- The sense of impotence and ensuing alienation experienced by many parents in trying to deal with local schools.
- The growing evidence of systematic failure of the school to deal effectively with some student populations.
- The growing evidence of the disaffection and psychic estrangement from schools of those who work within them -- teachers as well as students.
- The explication and spread of the notion that there is no 'one best system' of education for all youngsters.
- The growing public resentment of service agencies, and the ensuing critique of the service professions.
- The intensification of particular social problems including segregation, school violence and vandalism, the decline of the cities, and youth unemployment.

These situations gave rise to a variety of efforts to empower parents vis-a-vis schools. The initial plans featured such proposals as decentralization and advisory councils, which largely failed so far as parent empowerment is concerned. (Clasby, 1977; Gittell et al, 1973; Steinberg, 1979). The essential strategy of such plans was to increase the representational base of parents so that more of them -- and more <u>groups</u> of them -- had opportunity to participate in school deliberations (Raywid, 1980). It became increasingly evident, however, that what parents sought was not just <u>input</u> into decisions but <u>influence</u> -- two quite different things (Firestone, 1977). The choice idea grew gradually as an answer. The

opportunity to "vote with one's feet" represents instant empowerment, bestowing the opportunity to reject a whole school and move to another, if things get bad enough. Choice emerged, moreover, as a possible solution to other problems -- most notably to the need to desegregate schools.

This paper will briefly trace the history of the choice idea as it grew, and then examine some contemporary family choice models in detail. Before doing so, it might be relevant, however, to review the major choice mechanism in public schools prior to recent efforts to expand the options. This seems worth doing not only by way of backdrop, but also because there have been some who have persistently maintained that public schools have provided choice right along. The major means of doing so has been the provision of separate 'tracks' for student selection.

Tracking

Tracking has been the significant choice mechanism in the comprehensive high school, although there -- and in elementary schools -- a tracking system can operate without choice. As of 1967, tracking was held to discriminate unconstitutionally on both racial and economic grounds, at least as practiced in Washington, D.C. (Hobson vs. Hansen). The practice has been subject to challenge on both due process and equal protection grounds (Oakes, 1983). Yet it appears that many public schools continue tracking practices in various forms and to varying degrees. The idea underlying tracking at the secondary level has been to provide opportunity for students to enter school programs according with their post-high school plans, aspirations, and probable futures. Those intending to go on to college can choose the academic or college preparatory program; those planning to enter the work world immediately can, in a comprehensive high school, choose between a business-commercial program and a vocational program emphasizing manual skills. And a 'general' program is often maintained for those not college-bound but not disposed either toward the other alternatives. (One detailed study suggests that the general track, in contrast to the other three, is not the first choice of anyone. Most students enter it by default -- i.e., by virtue of poor performance in another track.) (Rosenbaum, 1976)

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The negatives associated with these curricular options emerge from the fact that they not only divide students as to interests and future plans but also as to ability, race, and socio-economic status. Moreover, not only does tracking produce immediate status differentials among students, but since content differs in different tracks, it tends permanently to freeze or limit youngsters to the tracks they have chosen. More precisely, they can always move -- or be moved -- downward, into a lower track; it is upward movement into a higher or more prestigious sequence that the tracking system prevents (Hobson vs. Hansen, 1967; Oakes, 1983; Rosenbaum, 1976).

According to some empirical evidence, the ability separations tend to increase differentials and the less fortunate youngsters -- minority, poor, low ability -- are the losers in all respects: they get the weaker teachers, less is expected of them, they participate less in school programs and activities, they fall farther behind their age-mates, and they are slotted for the lower status, less rewarded jobs within society (Gittell, 1973). In Washington, the arrangement discontinued by Judge Skelly Wright's landmark decision put high school students into four tracks: Honors, Regular College Prep, General, or Basic. Although advocates spoke of choice, and different curricular patterns marked each of the four tracks, each also represented a particular ability level (Hansen, 1968). Education in the lower tracks, said Judge Wright, "is geared to the 'blue-collar' student. Thus such children, ... stigmatized by inappropriate aptitude testing procedures, are denied equal opportunity to obtain the white collar education available to the white and more affluent children." (Filson, 1967)

It has been pointed out that the presentation of options based on prospective educational and career choices serves to pit national values against one another: it pits the values of choice and self-determination against the value of equal opportunity; it pits choice and equal opportunity against the efficiency of the school as an early identifier and preparer of students for their prospective social roles. This value conflict is by no means evident to all the actors. In fact, there is evidence that school administrators are themselves unclear about a tracking system's conflating of curricular choice with ability grouping. Studies of tracking

arrangements find principals to be confused or deceptive about the nature, extent, and effects of tracking within their own schools. For instance, one junior high which denied tracking — both by official policy and on the principal's report — was found to be operating nine separate tracks! Although students and their parents were not informed about it, the choice of a foreign language in the seventh grade served to place the student in one of five college-bound tracks; rejection of the language option slotted the student for one of four non-college bound tracks. Placement within each of the two broad categories created by the language choice was accomplished by assignment to ability-based levels by guidance counselors (Rosenbaum, 1976).

Certainly the confusion and the deception should be eliminated, and full, accurate information given; but is tracking necessarily an evil? For some the answer is no: students and their families should be free to select their own education — and if tastes or limitations circumscribe their choices, that is the cost of freedom. For others, the answer is yes: tracking is inherently wrong, and the only way a system of educational choice can be rendered right and proper is to (1) separate the choices from specific job preparation, (2) divorce them from ability grouping, and (3) make sure that they are not systematically generative of statuses and stigma. Such criteria limit the kinds of choices which can legitimately be offered, and defenders of the comprehensive high school have tended to avoid the question of how they might be met. (See, e.g., Tanner, 1979.) However, a number of specialty, alternative, and magnet schools have managed to operate within such limits while still responding to student needs and to their academic and career interests. (See footnote, page 23, for one way they have sought to do so.)

Alternatives

The alternatives movement within the public schools began in the late 60s. Parkway opened in Philadelphia in 1969, Wilson Open Campus School in Mankato, Minnesota, in 1968, and Murray Road in Newton, Massachusetts in 1967. Public 'alternative' schools were often influenced by private schools launched earlier in the 60s outside "the system." (Graubard, 1974;

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Nathan, 1976) They tended to be started for one or more of the following reasons:

1) To provide a more personalized and humanistic setting for young people.
2) To provide a broader, more exciting, challenging, and satisfying education for young people.
3) To provide a more meaningful link between childhood and adulthood, better acquainting young people with the world they are entering and better equipping them to deal with it.
4) To provide a more accurate picture of the world -- especially of its problems and injustices -- and more effective ways of dealing with it.
5) To open up genuine educational opportunities for youngsters with whom conventional public schooling seemed systematically unsuccessful -- e.g., inner city poor, ghetto minorities.

The programs growing out of these several purposes differed, of course, in consequence of the goals prompting them. The first three purposes listed often led to largely white, upper middle class, suburban alternatives; the fourth and fifth motives typically underlay urban, inner city programs. But both types were known as "alternative" schools and both sought, from the start to respond to particular student needs and interests allegedly unmet in regular schools -- and/or to particular parent concerns and desires which other schools failed to satisfy (Fantini, 1973).

Both types tended also to share another feature: they were not born of a commitment to educational diversity and choice. Rather, the people involved with them tended to see their programs as vanguard operations pointing the way to reforms all schools should embrace. The 'different strokes for different folks' idea -- and the explicit challenge to the 'one best system' arrangement undergirding American education -- were products of the early 70s, and did not obtain much circulation until several years after the first alternatives had become part of public school systems.

From the start, the alternatives took many forms and were institutionalized in diverse ways. The school-without-walls pioneered by Parkway became a favorite early model and as of 1973, 22% of existing public school alternatives were of this type. Open schools, Learning Centers, and Con-

tinuation Centers each accounted for another 20% of the programs identified as of that time (National Consortium for Options in Public Education, 1973). The Learning Centers concentrated special, unusual, or expensive resources in a common location, and the Continuation Centers brought alternative approaches to programs targeted for dropouts, pregnant teenagers, and other groups in need of special treatment. The school-without-walls arrangement put students to pursuing learning within the community rather than in classrooms. Their instruction consisted of observing and participating in business and industry, and in various municipal and professional offices.

Other alternatives pursued quite different instructional practices in very different settings, including storefronts, halls, and parsonages, as well as parts of schools. They featured such new ideas as independent study, experiential and service learning, and/or such older concepts as schools themselves as communities and democracies. What was common to these early alternatives was first, a tendency to emerge as a grassroots or home-grown phenomenon initiated and designed by those who would work within them; and second, a tendency to define themselves in terms of their departures from, and contrasts with, traditional schools (Wolf, Walker, & Mackin, 1974). From the start, then, alternative school people tended to be keenly aware of and explicitly desirous of creating these differences. Some of them experienced stunning successes in turning on the previously apathetic to learning — and in turning around the lives of young people whose futures had appeared dim. With the ebullience and confidence of the 60s, many hoped that such benefits could be widely obtained in other programs, once the pathway had been pointed out.

Options Systems

The schools comprising the first contemporary public choice systems had quite a different genesis, despite some similarities of individual programs to the earlier alternative schools. They were inspired by the U. S. Office of Education's Experimental Schools Program launched in 1971. The experience of two of the program's first three recipients is of special interest. Federal motives, purposes, and evaluation criteria made one of

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the two a success and the other a failure.

Minneapolis was the success story. There, a diversification effort in one area of the city functioned eventually to put all Minneapolis elementary schools on an options basis. Four programs were created in the pilot area: a Contemporary School, a Continuous Progress School, an Open School, and a Free School. The city's aims in the venture included (1) providing family choice, (2) decentralizing school governance, (3) increasing parent participation, (4) improving educational quality, and (5) desegregating schools. All five aims seemed to have been met by the options arrangement with sufficient success that after two years the School Board voted unanimously to extend it to all elementary schools. (It was later decided to extend the options plan also to the secondary level, but that decision was never carried out.) (Kent et al, 1975)

Descriptions of Minneapolis's Southeast Alternatives project make clear that a rather unique planning and implementation process occurred. The alternative schools were designed with extensive staff and parent participation. Indeed, even the group which designed the initial proposal to the Office of Education held weekly Saturday meetings to which all parents were invited by flyers which went home on Friday outlining the discussion agenda for the following day. And choice was an explicit aim not only for students and parents, but for teachers as well. The combining of choice and decentralization proved particularly propitious. As the situation was described by Superintendent John B. Davis (Kent et al, 1975),

> The participatory process...evolved in the SEA schools has reshaped the profession and returned a degree of authority to those who perform teaching roles. Functions of planning, decision-making, responsibility and accountability have been restored to the faculty, and in some cases roles of teachers and principals have been altered significantly.... What has evolved is a new collegial model...

Berkeley, the other key recipient of funds from the Experimental Schools program, was a somewhat different case. By the time the Experimental Schools program began in 1971, Berkeley already had nine alternative schools, begun with the aid of at least two foundation grants (Kohn, 1973). The five-year commitment, and the $6 million promised under the federal grant, permitted extending the total to 23 alternatives and enrolling 30% of the city's students in alternative programs. But some have

questioned the extent of the commitment of Berkeley school officials from the start, and the project foundered on misunderstandings between Berkeley school people and the federal government's two controlling agencies (first the Office of Education, then the newly-created National Institute of Education). The government's interest was in researching methods for changing entire districts. Berkeley's interests, it seemed, included solving racial problems and otherwise humanizing the programs enrolling youngsters from families concerned about such matters. Federal intervention -- on the part of grant monitors and federal courts -- interfered with Berkeley's alternatives, closed two of them, and yielded continuing frustrations. Some claim that midst the conditions obtaining, it is not surprising that there was little impact of the alternatives on the system; that during the grant period, the alternatives seemed to revert more and more to conventional practice; and that most of the alternatives closed even before the grant period ended. The federally contracted external evaluator submitted a report highly critical of the way the project and its evaluation had been coerced by Washington, and suggested that the entire venture might well be characterized "a $6 million misunderstanding." (Institute for Scientific Analysis, 1976)

Meanwhile, the Experimental Schools Program which funded Berkeley, and Minneapolis's pilot project, was not the only federal program helping to generate alternatives systems. The Office of Economic Opportunity was anxious to test the voucher concept and in 1972 awarded funds to the Alum Rock district in San Jose, California, for that purpose. The agreement so modified voucher presuppositions, however, as to create an alternatives system within the public schools instead (Weiler, 1974). (The most important departures from the voucher idea included the absence of private school participants, and of restrictions on financial incentives to popular schools and of teacher risk at unpopular ones.) During the five-year grant period, there were as many as 50 mini-schools or alternative programs within the district's 25 elementary schools. In the interests of making diverse programs accessible in all areas, they offered 10 different types, emphasizing Basic Skills, Fine Arts, Creative Arts, Multi-Cultural Learning, Bilingual and Bicultural Learning, Careers, Open Education, Individualized Instruction, and Learning by Doing. One or another of these

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10 different types or models was implemented at each of the 50 sites.

Creation of the mini-schools was a condition of receiving the grant, of course -- since diversification, or real alternatives are important to meaningful choice. This meant that even though individual teachers and schools made their own decisions on whether to participate, there were sometimes pressures to do so. There were also incentives, which included additional resources (coming largely from the compensatory sums accompanying poor children) and increased professional autonomy in the design and management of one's program.

Few have called the Alum Rock experiment a success. In the first place, it failed to generate truly diverse alternatives, and observers found only limited departures from traditional practice (Rand, 1981). Parents -- especially the most alienated -- appreciated the choice opportunity but were disappointed when the programs did not live up to their expectations. Many parents failed to exercise the choice option and did so only to choose the neighborhood school (Bridge & Blackman, 1978). There were no consistent, appreciable differences in student outcomes (Capell, 1981). Teachers, although pleased at their increased control over their own classrooms, and at the extra resources, reported workload increases and tensions with colleagues in other mini-schools within the building (Rasmussen, 1981).

The Rand volume summarizing the evaluation of the Alum Rock experiment is very careful, however, in stating what can be concluded from the project (Rand, 1981). Of course, the departures from the voucher concept agreed upon from the start mean that virtually nothing can be concluded relative to the feasibility or operation of a voucher system (Wortman & St. Pierre, 1977). But with respect to public alternatives systems, can it validly be inferred from the Alum Rock report that they are doomed to very limited and partial success? — Or is it that such systems launched under certain conditions and implemented in particular ways are unlikely to prove successful? The following factors have all been advanced as crucial limitations on the success-potential of the Alum Rock alternatives:

1) There was never local interest in options or diversification -- on the part of the community, or school authorities.
2) There was no evidence of dissatisfaction within the district prior

to the experiment, and in fact parents had been pleased with the schools.

3) District officials' interest in the project was limited to the solution of financial problems, the desire to decentralize school governance, and a general concern with increased parental participation.

4) The timing of the award left very little time for designing the initial alternatives and time was not subsequently made available for doing so.

5) There was no district-level support in the planning of programs or in the provision of staff development activities for designing or implementing them.

Thus, the first three major attempts at options systems — as distinct from individual alternatives — yielded mixed success. The Minneapolis effort was the most promising of the three, while the other two appeared problematic, although for different reasons. We shall see some of what now appears relevant to outcomes of family choice arrangements as we look in subsequent pages at the several models that have emerged. It has been the purpose of these brief synopses just to present some highlights of the early history of alternatives systems.

CHOICE PLANS AND POSSIBILITIES

As we begin exploring the various models of family choice that have operated in recent decades, it may be useful to consider the range of logical possibilities regarding choice. Formal education has a number of components and it is possible in principle for families to have some choices with respect to some or all of these. There is always a curriculum with detailed content, and this is presented through particular instructional methods and activities, by teachers, and within schools. Here, then, are four possible areas of choice: curriculum and content; methods; teachers; schools. A brief look at each will both substantiate the absence of choice in schooling decisions, and the somewhat narrow practicable possibilities for instituting it.

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Curriculum and Content

The idea of curricular choice is certainly a familiar one. Ever since Harvard's famed President Charles Eliot presented his electives proposal at the turn of the century, the notion of choice as to courses has been familiar in American education. Eliot's proposal, although criticized as yielding a "cafeteria" system, gained acceptance (and decades later was upgraded with the call for schools to become great "smorgasbords" of learning). (Holt, 1970)

A number of today's critics are charging that that is exactly what has happened. Exposes reporting that a high school offers 111 different course choices -- or 300 or 87 -- have become familiar over the past few years. What is rarely reported, however, is who can choose them, and to what extent. It could be that despite Holt's smorgasbord recommendation, and the current expose articles, in most American schools there have been relatively few curricular options for students and their families (Rosenbaum, 1976). In my own suburban, New York, school district, for example, elementary school yields no choices. Junior high, as of five years ago, proffered exactly two, over the three-year period: whether and which foreign language, and typing or no typing. And high school didn't offer a great many more, once post-graduation aspirations were declared.

Comprehensive high schools typically offer the four tracks identified in the previous section. But this system is not synonymous with choice. In the first place, there are serious questions as to the extent to which students choose or are assigned or "guided" into the various tracks. Moreover, once entered, the track may permit very few electives. Yet these tracks have constituted the major means by which schools recognize and respond to the differences in youngsters, and their interests and plans. As the system operates, the 'track' metaphor may well be a lot more apt than widely supposed. Once embarked, there may remain few choices -- with digressions tantamount to derailments! (Rosenbaum, 1976)

John Goodlad's recent study reported, for example, considerable similarity in the social studies curricula of junior highs. At the high school level, American history and government constitute 'the basics.' Goodlad found a range of electives beyond these basics -- but an interest

in choice makes it important to ask not only how many options there are to choose among, but how many choices one gets. If the situation permits but one social studies elective, it may well prove misleading to hear that the school offers twenty such electives. Unfortunately, none of the school studies appearing to date seem to have addressed this question, so it remains a question whether the number of choices has commonly been as extensive as current criticisms would suggest.

A study of several years ago found that the pressing question in curriculum-making was not what shall be taught, but who would decide that (Schaffarzick et al, 1976). Certainly this would suggest high interest in choice.

Construing content as the substance fitting into and comprising the different curricula — the specific subject matter within each course — then schools have been even less willing to permit content than curricular choices. Although some choice among specified options is not uncommon within some courses -- e.g., to determining book reports for English class -- such opportunities constitute a relatively small portion of the work. And family attempts at content determination are extremely difficult to accommodate in a regular school arrangement. Typical classroom settings and management procedures are such that protests most typically have to result in no more than holding a youngster out of class while offending fare is under consideration. The only alternative would be permitting some families to impose their preferences on an entire class.

Present classroom arrangements and decision structures make it likely that most family attempts to influence content decisions will elicit charges of censorship and evoke defenses of academic freedom (Strike, 1977). The dramatic incidents of Kanawha County, West Virginia, a decade ago consisted of just such a struggle as this. One group of parents objected strenuously to content and materials used in English classes, calling them "anti-God, anti-family, and anti-America." (Schulman, 1975) In the absence of school choice arrangements, they could press their case only by seeking control over the content and material to be presented to all youngsters. It is undoubtedly the difficulty of resolving such situations satisfactorily which has led the courts to severely limit the rights of parents to prevail. Mere matters of taste and preference do not

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suffice, and in general, courts have upheld parent protests against content and materials only when (1) their criticisms have reached "constitutional proportions" -- and (2) when no greater state interest justifies overriding their constitutional rights (Schulman, 1975; Hirschoff, 1977).

Attempts to envision what school keeping would be like under circumstances where individual families chose content and materials are likely to appear as nightmares to most professional educators. Of all the places and ways in which family choice might figure, this is perhaps the most difficult to envisage as satisfactory. Yet the problems making it so attach largely to traditional classroom management arrangements and appear more tractable under different arrangements.

For example, there is currently at least one plan for direct individual family participation in the selection of content and materials (Esbensen & Richards, 1976). It is reported to have operated successfully in the public schools of Edina, Minnesota, and perhaps elsewhere. It combines an individualized instruction plan, performance-based goals, and mutual negotiation among a student, a teacher, and a parent to arrive at the learning contracts the student will fulfill. The arrangement calls for a minimum of four annual conferences among the three parties, to design plans for the student. It has operated K-12 and, at the high school level the amount of time spent in the program is itself a matter of choice: a student can register for anything from a single unit to a full program of independent study. Although subject to negotiation -- e.g., in the interests of meeting state graduation requirements -- students and their families under this plan gain considerable power in decisions of content and materials to be pursued.

Instructional Methods and Activities

If family choice is limited with respect to curriculum and content then how about with respect to the methods whereby the learning will occur? Do instructional methods and activities yield greater choice? As one might guess, aside from extremely limited classroom project choices (e.g., do a written book report or do an oral presentation), methodological choices appear rare. The bringing about of learning is, after all, the

teacher's principal stock-in-trade. The educator's claim to professional knowledge and expertise is usually thought to reside in just the ability to make and execute informed decisions on such matters. Thus, it might predictably be rare when this professional responsibility were assigned to families. Perhaps the only major choice opportunities in this regard are somewhat indirect. In those alternatives or magnets which feature a pedagogical approach (e.g., open or traditionalist programs), instructional methods are a prominent part of what is chosen. The same is true of particular types of programs such as schools-without-walls and internships. The opportunity each extends is for a different approach to learning than usual classroom instruction comprises.

Still another context in which learners -- if not their families -- may be said to have indirect choice opportunities related to instructional methods is that provided by attempts to match teaching styles to learning styles. At least some such plans stem from student responses on instruments asking which of several presented sorts of learning arrangements they prefer. Attempts to tailor instruction to the modes most compatible for the learner* might be said to introduce a type of choice.

But these several arrangements yielding a degree of choice with respect to instructional methods and activities tend to be indirect -- i.e., the methods are components of a larger package available for selection, as is the case with the school-within-a-school or the internship option. In few, if any, instances are families offered opportunities to decide whether memorization and drill or problem-solving shall dominate a youngster's pursuit of learning. By and large, pedagogical methods are probably the least likely components of the school program to yield direct family choice opportunities. As noted, the selection of pedagogical methods is simply too central to what both educators and non-educators see as the teacher's professional province.

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*It should be noted that this distorts the matching idea a bit -- since most versions recommend introducing content via the student's stronger or preferred modes, but otherwise having learners pursue modes not preferred, in the interests of developing them. (See e.g., Dunn, 1983.)

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Teachers

What, then, with respect to choosing teachers themselves? Presumably they could be an object of family choice, and this is a point at which families may in fact often attempt to influence decisions. Open pick-a-teacher arrangements are extremely rare, however. Three sorts of considerations tend to militate against them. The first is professional claims, which operate in several ways to oppose choice: they suggest that the decision as to who might work most effectively with a given child is first and foremost a technical question demanding the special knowledge of educators. Professionalism also contributes to a broad assumption of the equivalence of teachers due to their similar education and training: since all have been exposed to the same knowledge and the same clinical training, they are essentially equal in that which is relevant to their professional performance. Hence, family choice is unnecessary.

The interests of administrative convenience provide a second major obstacle to family selection of teachers. It is far easier and less troublesome in personal terms to let a school employee -- or, more recently, the computer -- do it. This way, different classes can be equalized in size, tracked as to ability levels if that seems indicated, or adjusted as to composition on any other criterion as administrators see fit. And to routinize this procedure in some simple way -- such as random assignment by computer -- is far less demanding of time and emotional energy than to help families make their decisions and respond to their preferences and prejudices.

Teachers themselves have often opposed pick-a-teacher arrangements. Certainly to have others' classes fill up while one's own remained underenrolled would be a professional embarrassment. But the price could be even steeper than humiliation -- as several recent plans have made quite plain. Harvey Scribner, former chancellor of New York City's schools and now a professor at the University of Massachusetts, is a strong advocate of choice in education. He wants families to be able to choose the schools their youngsters will attend, the programs in which they will be enrolled, and the specific teachers with whom they will learn. In making his case, Dr. Scribner emphasizes how such an arrangement will drive poor teachers

from classrooms since they will not be able to attract a clientele (1983). Another plan enabling family choice of teachers might conceivably yield similar effects, but it is presented somewhat differently: a Minnesota superintendent is anxious to try an arrangement he calls an "Entrepreneurial Teacher School System." (Lieber, 1983) Teacher salaries and classroom budgets would be based on their enrollments. A teacher with a sufficiently attractive program might then be in a position to hire assistants, as well as to obtain additional materials. To my knowledge, neither the Scribner nor the Lieber plan has yet been implemented — and indeed, Alum Rock teachers insisted on protections from just the sorts of possibilities that these two proposals envision (Weiler, 1974). The threats they raise, when juxtaposed with the power of teacher organizations, suggest that the likelihood of such arrangements is remote. Indeed, the Scribner proposal seems to highlight as positives what are precisely the negatives for powerful stakeholders — and thus to epitomize the difficulties such a plan would encounter.

Schools

It would appear, then, that the extent to date, and the prospects, for family choice are limited with respect to the selection of curriculum and content, instructional methods, and teachers. Logical, ideological, political, and professional considerations all serve to restrict the number and desirability of such choice models. There remains, however, the possibility of family choice of an entire school — or of a distinct, separate unit within a school. Such an arrangement seems to offer considerable advantage over the other three. (1) It provides a practicable means of extending curricular and content choice well beyond what usual practice permits. It may also constitute a methodological option as well. (2) The possibility of choosing among several types of schools enables more families to maximize their preferences, and at the least cost to others who do not share them — major advantages in a democratic society. (3) Deliberately diversified schools (or units within schools) also provide a feasible mechanism for combining the values of family choice and professionalism: the options available consist of programs professionally

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designed and operated. But as a group they represent different kinds of educations, facilitating the selection of the program that best accords with family preferences. This way, even in the absence of direct choice opportunities as to each program component (curriculum, content, instructional methods, teachers), there are options as to overall program selection. (4) Finally, and of enormous importance: it seems increasingly clear that only diversification among schools (or units) can provide a choice of school climate -- which may ultimately be the single most important selection criterion for both students and their parents (Erickson, 1982; Goodlad, 1983b; Grant, 1981; Raywid, 1983).

Since the choice arrangement has proved much more workable with respect to schools than with respect to one or another of the components of schools, it is not surprising that many more models of this type have emerged. We now have numerous types falling within three genres known variously as alternatives, magnets, and specialty schools. Before exploring them, a warning about usages: There are serious nomenclature difficulties in discussing alternative schools, magnets, and specialty schools. Some people use the term <u>alternatives</u> generically, as synonymous with schools of choice. For others, however, the word alternatives refers only to particular types of schools. For many, it is schools for problem youngsters -- and thus they find it an affront to magnet and specialty schools to view them as subsets of alternatives. For them, alternatives are just one subset of magnets. The alternatives label seems to carry a variety of denotations -- and negative connotations for many. New York City has only ten programs formally classified as alternatives. They are all targeted for "at risk" students. Yet, other people in the area tend to associate the term instead with the most radical free schools of the 60s and 70s -- leaving them, too, less than positive about the objects of their caricatures. Some parts of the country have still another usage, whereby "alternatives" are not schools of choice at all, but punitive arrangements such as in-school suspension programs.

An ensuing complication is that the same sorts of programs go by different labels in different communities. For example, Manhattan's District 4 schools are known as "alternative concept" schools, but appear to be what a recent study has defined as magnets (Blank et al, 1983). And Milwaukee

calls its magnets "specialty schools."

The upshot is that one has to proceed with some caution before deciding that family choice schools in one district are similar to those identically named in another, and the conclusion that programs differently named in adjoining communities are in fact different requires similar care. Perhaps just one apparent distinction marking the two kinds of schools of choice most often named may prove helpful from the start: alternative schools are usually (but not always) "localized" or single-program efforts within a district, designed to respond to a single challenge or problem or target group. They are not likely to beget other alternatives within the district. Magnet schools, in contrast, usually represent a district commitment to at least some degree of diversification, and so one rarely finds a district with just one magnet. If there is one, there are likely to be more. Beyond this single tendency, however, there seem few constants in the usage of these terms.

The entries among the broad types of schools of choice are sufficiently numerous and varied that an attempt at logical ordering may help. A logically adequate typology with parallel entries and mutually exclusive categories is not yet possible. Nevertheless, some groupings may lend clarity to the discussion to follow.

Structurally, schools of choice take one of the following forms. They may be intra-district or inter-district:

- Open enrollment schools
- Magnets
- Alternatives
- Public vouchers
- Specialty schools

Individually, they are one of the following:

- School-within-a-school
- Mini-school
- Entire school
- Satellite or 'outpost'

Programmatically, magnets, alternatives, public vouchers, and specialty schools often take one of two forms: the dominant feature organizing and articulating them is their curriculum, or it is their instructional methods and activities.

Curriculum-dominated programs include:

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Magnet schools (especially at the high school level)
Specialty schools (especially at the high school level)

Sample Curricular programs include:

Multicultural
Just community
Language academies
Health services
Performing arts

Programs defined more by their instructional activities than by their content include:

Magnets (especially at the elementary level)
Specialty schools (especially at the elementary level)
Alternatives

Samples of individual programs so organized include:

Schools-without-walls
Montessori schools
Walkabout or Challenge programs
Open schools
Free schools
Fundamental or Traditionalist schools

With respect to target populations, magnets, vouchers, specialty, and alternative schools also differ. Some are designed to draw a representative cross section of the district's students with respect to racial, ethnic, and socio-economic origins; ability and achievement levels; and school motivation. Others are designed to respond primarily to one or another student type:

Bored and turned off students
The unchallenged
Gifted and talented
Underachievers
Low achievers
Dropout-prone
Dropouts
Disruptive
Students in trouble with the law

* * * * * * * * * * *

The foregoing groupings present 36 categories and sub-categories of family choice models. Although some simply appear different names for the same thing (e.g., magnets and specialty schools), other listings (e.g., the programmatically oriented schools) are only illustrative and far from complete. Thus, only some types of schools have been selected for detailed

examination in this paper. They constitute a logically ragged set, but were selected with several things in mind. One criterion used was the total numbers of a given type currently operating nationwide. A second consideration has been information available, since research on schools of choice is scant and skewed as to type: except where a federal initiative has mandated studies (as in the case of magnet schools, programs for youngsters at risk, and Experimental Schools Program projects), the knowledge base is generally limited to individual school evaluations and case studies. School types have been selected for examination with these knowledge limits in mind. Finally, and more fundamentally, our list for detailed examination consists largely of structurally differentiated types in preference to programmatically different types since structure appears to have more to do than particular program with the potential of a school of choice, for responding successfully to student need and family preference.

Open Enrollment

The unfulfilled promise of plans for increasing family influence and control played a considerable part in generating the notion of individual choice: If families could not substantially influence what a school was and did, at least they might have the freedom to choose among schools. That falls something short of the power to specify what the options made available shall be; but it is a real gain to be in a position to make one's own choice among several possibilities — or at least initially it appeared a real gain. This was the promise of "Open Enrollment." The cities where it has been tried include Chicago, Kansas City, St. Paul, New York, and Los Angeles (Levine, 1983). Details regarding the plan as it continues to operate in one city today may suffice to show its general nature.

New York City's Open Enrollment plan was begun in 1960 to provide an opportunity for "parents of pupils in schools with a heavy concentration of minority groups ... to transfer their children to schools with unused space and to an educational situation where reasonably varied ethnic distribution exists." (Board of Education, City of New York, 1963) Thus, from the start, Open Enrollment was not construed so much as a choice plan as a

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voluntary desegregation option made available to minority individuals. The plan continues in operation today with a slightly expanded purpose. The Free Choice Transfer Program as it is now titled, operates so as to help stabilize schools in changing neighborhoods and maintain racially balanced enrollments; to integrate schools; and to equalize school utilization (while maintaining ethnic balance). (Elias, 1983) There is also now a Reverse Open Enrollment plan for white families in predominantly white schools, seeking an integrated setting. There are no official records on transfers under this plan, but the Office of Zoning and Integration unofficially reports there are few takers.

The Open Enrollment plan has enabled parents in some schools to transfer their children to designated "receiving" schools. At some schools they were initially permitted a range of choice, at others there were pairing arrangements designating which receiving school an Open Enrollment applicant would attend. In the former case, transfer applicants indicated several choices, and assignments were made on a first-come, first-served basis by the Board of Education's Central Zoning Unit. As the program operates today, "sending" schools have high concentrations of minority populations, and "receiving" schools have populations consisting of 70% or more white students. Parents can designate a stipulated "cluster" of schools as their first choice (and other clusters as second and third choices), but the choice among the schools designated as the "cluster" -- as well as those constituting the "cluster" -- is made by the Board of Education's Office of Zoning and Integration.

A 1967 study of New York's Open Enrollment program (Fox) found that it provided a genuine opportunity for a better education, as well as for a desegregated school, for families choosing Open Enrollment. Although qualitative differences were less pronounced at the elementary level, receiving junior high schools were consistently judged superior to the sending schools -- with respect to teacher functioning, pupil functioning, and overall school quality. Tellingly, more than two-thirds of the observers comprising the evaluation team reported they would be enthusiastic about enrolling their own children in one of the "receiving" schools -- and an equal number would be negative about enrolling their children in one of the "sending" schools.

The Open Enrollment program has never attracted very large numbers of students. Between September, 1961 and September, 1963, the transfers effected for youngsters in grades 3-5 numbered 13,118. During the current 1983-84 school year, only 1,143 new transfers have been effected under the program (Archer, 1983). As a percentage of eligible enrollment totals, these figures are quite small. It is possible that the restrictions on choice are a factor (i.e., being able only to designate a group of schools, not to choose a particular school), or that the socio-economic status of the inner city clientele of most schools designated as "sending" explains their relative lack of use of the choice option (Bridge & Blackman, 1978). Still another factor, however, may well be the limited value of choice in the absence of differentiation. If there are no clear grounds for distinguishing one option from another -- no differences, for example, in curriculum or instructional approach -- then the opportunity to choose may be thought quite limited. In fact, despite the qualitative differences between sending and receiving schools noted above, it may be that choices under the circumstances we have described are more typically a matter of "fleeing from" than "moving to." Where substantial and visible differences are evident, larger numbers might reasonably be expected to take advantage of the choice opportunity.

Magnet Schools

So far as numbers affected are concerned, the idea of family choice in education received a tremendous boost from a 1976 amendment to the federal Emergency School Aid Act. The amendment authorized grants to support the planning and implementation of magnet schools in districts involved in desegregating. It stimulated the nation's first widespread attempts to establish real options systems -- as opposed to one or two alternative schools. Since 1976, magnets have become a prominent part of the desegregation plans of a number of urban districts where it has been assumed that distinctive, attractive themed programs could draw students across racial lines. Magnets have been perceived, then, as voluntary alternatives to forced busing. But they have also increasingly been seen as an effective means of enhancing the quality of education, and as a rather reliable route

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to improved parent satisfaction and public confidence.

A recent study identified more than a thousand magnet schools and programs in districts of 20,000 or more students (Fleming, Blank et al, 1982). Approximately one-third of the nation's districts of this size now have magnets (Blank et al, 1983). They are largely an urban phenomenon and they are more numerous in the Northeast, Midwest, and West than elsewhere. In cities which have magnets, they now collectively enroll between 1% and 37% of the student population -- depending on district goals and the number of magnets made available (Blank et al, 1983). Most of these programs (59%) are at the elementary level, where the distinctive feature designed to attract students and their families is a certain type of pedagogical style or environment -- e.g., traditionalist programs, open or free schools, Montessori schools. At the high school level, the distinctive feature is typically a curricular concentration emphasizing particular disciplines (e.g., math and science), particular career areas (e.g., health services),* or particular themes (e.g., environmentalism, multiculturalism).

Magnets are defined as schools (1) that offer a special or distinctive program attractive to students of all races; (2) that students enter on a voluntary basis; and (3) which are, in fact, racially mixed and thus serve to decrease segregation (McMillan, 1980). However, as the magnet idea has matured, and additional concerns have shaped public discussion, a shift has gradually occurred in magnet school orientation -- or more properly, an expansion has taken place, from an exclusive preoccupation with effecting desegregation to include "an emphasis on providing quality education or educational options for the district." (Fleming, Blank et al, 1982) Shifts in emphasis have paralleled the discovery that magnets are somewhat less effective in desegregating schools than had been hoped -- but a great deal more effective in improving educational quality, and simultaneously, school image and support.

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*Career magnets tend to differ from traditional vocational schools by virtue of their focus on career <u>areas</u> (e.g., aviation) rather than on specific careers (e.g., aviation mechanic). They thus attract students of differing talents, abilities, and career aspiration levels.

The ESAA grants for magnet schools had been intended solely for desegregation purposes -- and indeed, according to then-Assistant Secretary of Education Mary Berry, in the absence of any evidence whatsoever regarding their educational effectiveness (Middleton, 1977). They have subsequently been found helpful to reducing the number of students in racially isolated schools and to aiding in district-wide desegregation efforts. Magnets have been maximally successful in desegregating districts where the minority population numbers less than 30% of the total student enrollment, and/or where there are several minorities (Blank et al, 1982; Rossell, 1979). And they are also widely thought to be more effective as a part of a desegregation plan than as a total plan (Blank et al, 1983; Royster et al, 1979). Certainly, the opportunity to choose a school has reduced tensions and conflict in districts where busing has been mandated (Blank et al, 1983). But magnet school enrollment continues to average only 5% of enrollment totals in districts offering such programs. Mean percentage varies considerably, of course, with the number of magnet openings available to students within a given district (Blank et al, 1983), so this total may be a better indicator of how extensively districts have gone into magnets, than of magnet popularity among students and parents. The most recent and extensive magnet school study concludes that the contributions of such schools to district-wide desegregation are directly related to such variables as district purposes -- which are not always district-wide desegregation but can, for example, pertain simply to desegregating particular schools. Levels of district commitment and local implementation are also crucial success determinants, and these can range from weak and ambivalent support, and quite minimal change at the school level, to high levels of conviction and innovation.

Magnet schools have been extremely successful in some regards. They often introduce programs of high quality into areas that have despaired of seeing such change. The recently concluded study of magnets commissioned by the Department of Education (Blank et al, 1983) applied two kinds of quality assessment: processes and arrangements observable daily within the school, and student achievement outcomes. The processes pertained to such diverse factors as task-related behavior, interaction and communication, reflections of a sense of community, and mission-activities congruence.

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The achievement outcomes consisted of test scores in math and reading. Combining these quality assessments, investigators were willing to call one-third of their sample high quality schools -- a figure low enough to confirm that magnets are not the long-sought model that comes with guarantees, but also substantial enough to display the model's potential, and to rank it quite favorably in relation to most urban schools.

The study also found other sorts of success to be associated with magnet schools. One unanticipated finding was "the discovery ... that the degree of interest in, and commitment to, magnet schools at the local level is much higher than anticipated from existing research and reports." Relatedly, they discovered, "Some local school boards, administrators, teachers and parents are finding magnet schools to be valuable as an approach to revitalization and reform of their schools." (Blank et al, 1983) The sense of promise emanates from the innovative quality of a number of the programs; staff commitment and dedication to them; and a shared perception of 'specialness' on the part of teachers and students, generating an unusual camaraderie. The reasons for this, in turn, may relate to teacher interest in the theme, and to better student behavior and performance by virtue of learner interest. As one teacher put it, "I can teach here. I don't have to worry about motivating (and disciplining) students." (Blank et al, 1983) Undoubtedly, additional school environment factors are also involved -- such as coherence and clear mission, and the opportunity (indeed, the need) of teachers to develop their own curricula.

Staff are not the only group to respond positively to magnet schools. On such indicators as approval expressed, behavior, participation, and attendance, students like magnets (Fleming, Blank et al, 1982; Stanley, 1982). Parent satisfaction rates are invariably higher in magnets than in other schools (Blank et al, 1983). But even among adults who do not have children attending them, magnets also generate perceptions of quality (Fleming, Blank et al, 1982). The explanations of such positive response are not entirely clear. Undoubtedly the presence of choice -- the voluntary nature of magnets -- is a factor in student enthusiasm. And quite probably, attributes already noted -- student interest in the magnet theme, the unusual commitment of staff, the innovative nature of the programs, the coherence and climate of 'specialness' -- contribute to student enthu-

siasm. Evidently, however, one earlier-supposed factor in parental enthusiasm is not a contributant: parent involvement levels appear neither high nor unique as to type. Parents may be involved -- but if so, it is typically in roles created for community members, not explicitly for parents (Blank et al, 1983). Magnets do seem to have generated some rather unusual involvement patterns with local citizens, organizations, and institutions, and these may well figure in some of the enthusiasm of local adults without youngsters in these schools. People in fields and organizations related to the magnet theme sometimes perform instructional functions, both in the school and elsewhere, as, for example, the supervisors of interns. But magnets have also generated more novel connections. For instance, there are cases of magnet-university linkage whereby the university provides diverse forms of technical assistance in a continuing relationship. Magnets are involved in adopt-a-school programs, and private organizations have also provided unusual sorts of services to them, as in the case of a corporation which loaned a school district two marketing executives to assist in designing a recruitment strategy for its new magnets.

As the foregoing suggests, magnet schools offer a number of advantages as a family choice model: they contribute to desegregation, to school revitalization and quality education, and to student, parent, and community satisfaction levels -- hence to the restoration of public confidence in the schools. There are also, however, some problems in their implementation and some unanticipated negative consequences of their operation.

First, magnets seem to be in a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't position with respect to their desegregation purpose. If they fail to attract sufficient whites, or sufficient minorities, they have of course failed to desegregate. On the other hand, if they are too successful in attracting either majority or minority students, they tend to re-segregate or 'ghettoize' in the absence of quotas. And if quotas or insufficient spaces bar applicants, complaints are understandable. These fundamental difficulties have sometimes yielded cases where individuals and groups have felt particularly abused -- e.g., blacks who have been deprived of attending a nearby magnet while whites who chose it are welcomed and bused in -- in the interests of achieving racial balance -- and neighborhood schools

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left less racially balanced due to the exodus of youngsters leaving for a magnet school.

In addition to the finding of several studies that the overall contribution of magnets to desegregation is slight, there have also been cases where magnets have actually appeared to decrease overall desegregation by concentrating it in the magnet schools -- i.e., by attracting a substantial portion of a relatively small minority away from regular schools and concentrating them in magnet schools. It is presumably consequences such as these which lead to such paradoxical and negative reports as a recent claim that "under voluntary desegregation plans in Houston, Flint, Michigan, and ... in Los Angeles ... the number of racially isolated schools actually increased." (Caldwell, 1982)

Still another desegregation-related problem has been the admissions requirements of magnet schools. Although the requirements revealed by the recent study are hardly steep enough to support charges of "elitism" -- and magnet teachers repeatedly report average student ability -- nevertheless it appears that 89% of the programs studied sought to screen out the most problematic students. Of these programs, only 13% were judged highly selective. But another 60% of the magnets sampled tried to avoid the 'dumping ground' threat by means of modest entrance requirements such as performance at grade level and the absence of serious social and behavioral problems. Such standards are understandable; but they can be viewed to exclude precisely the group most in need of a different and better education. Moreover, investigators found that other forms of selectivity can also occur -- as a result of student self-selection, the focus and strategy of marketing magnets, and performance requirements for remaining in the magnet once admitted (Blank et al, 1983).

Such problems have been associated with charges of 'skimming' and 'draining' — i.e., that magnets tend to skim off the ablest and most motivated students, thus draining the most talented from other schools and contributing to the impoverishment and further ghettoization of such schools. Such consequences have produced charges that magnets establish a dual educational structure in large urban districts, in which they constitute "privileged subsystems" (Arnove and Strout, 1978) — privileged in that they are able to select their students, and to get rid of those who fail to

measure up.

There are other dimensions also to charges of special privilege. In the first place, successful magnets are exempted from a number of standard district regulations and procedures. This may mean more favorable student-teacher ratios, or greater advantage in determining schedules or in allocating budgets. In a number of districts it means higher per student costs. Although magnets at the elementary level frequently have lower per pupil costs than other local schools, these costs are typically higher in secondary-level magnets. This averaged, in the recent magnet school study, to an 8% overall differentiation in per student expenditures. Some of the greater costs are related, of course, to start-up expenses and decline sharply in two or three years. Others, however, related to special equipment and facilities, and to increased transportation costs. The magnet schools in the sample experience transportation costs 27% higher than non-magnets — an unavoidable consequence in light of the desegregation purposes of magnets (Blank, 1983).

Finally, some have asserted that in the nature of the case, magnets cannot bring about ethnic and socio-economic desegregation because of the choice provisions lying at their core. On the one hand, unless student affiliation is voluntary, you do not have a magnet program at all. On the other hand, in a family choice system, ethnically- and class-related values associated with child-rearing enter into the choices different families make (Warren, 1978). And these, it is alleged, will not only perpetuate insidious differences, but will prove inimical to equal opportunity. To cite the example often given: The traits which appear to have well served lower class parents are obedience, docility, and deference to authority. It is natural, therefore, that such parents seek to instill these traits in their children. Yet the result is to differentiate them from middle class youngsters — whose parents value independence, assertiveness, and autonomy — and it may also be to limit their chances for upward socio-economic mobility.

Some of these problems appear amenable to practical solution while others may be costs and paradoxes inherent in the magnet idea — or, more fundamentally, the choice idea. It could well be that magnet development, like other policy proposals, would be desirable at the present juncture,

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given the problems we face today, while not representing a desirable permanent solution or a panacea. This is by no means an intent to damn with faint praise, however: quite possibly it is the misguided search for permanent solutions that makes practical response to our problems so difficult. Given public education's current straits -- segregation, quality and enrollment declines, lack of public confidence -- widespread adoption of magnet schools might well serve multiple purposes, and serve them better than the other policy alternatives open to us.

There has now been sufficient investigation of magnets to suggest what features conduce to their success. The following have been listed as the traits comprising "the "the ideal design for magnets," as recommended by the findings of the recent study by Blank et al (1983):

a) District-wide access for students on the basis on voluntary preference

b) A curricular theme that is definite, appealing, and distinctive

c) A principal and a staff capable of accomplishing the theme as it has been presented to the public

d) Instruction that is regularly reviewed by the school district for its rigor and fairness, i.e., accountability

e) A facility and site selected on the basis of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic neutrality

f) Good transportation and school security services

g) Student and staff composition that closely reflects the racial and ethnic composition of the community

h) A method of checks and balances that will prevent segregation or educational deprivation in non-magnet schools

i) Startup funds for facilitating early success in implementation.

Schools-Within-Schools

As we move from a close look at magnets to schools-within-schools, a switch in category types must be noted. Indeed, some of the magnet schools just discussed are schools-within-schools. Other schools-within-schools, however, have been alternatives -- i.e., localized programs of choice in

districts where they may be the sole alternative to the regular program, or perhaps one of two. In fact, a growing number of alternatives have, over the years, been housed within a parent school. As of 1982, a fifth of the nation's alternatives were schools-within-schools (Raywid, 1982).

The school-within-a-school model related closely to at least two prominent themes of the 60s. One was the perception of the typical school system as an overblown, impervious bureaucracy, the second was a desire to render schools as humane and supportive institutions. Although the idea of rendering large schools smaller and more personalized through administrative division did not start with alternative education, it was certainly developed and extended through alternatives. The literature of the 40s and 50s shows some reports of "little school" or "unit" plans. Most typically these were intended to make large schools more personalized, but not to affect the instructional program — and certainly not to bring about any sort of diversification. Indeed, how to maintain uniformity under such conditions was sometimes noted as a challenge. In the 60s, alternatives adopted and extended the organizational format, using it to rather different purposes.

A school-within-a-school, or SWAS, is an administrative unit created within a larger school. It gains separateness and distinctness by having its own students and teachers, its own courses and space and distinctive environment. Most schools-within-schools are probably at the secondary level where a personalized environment is likely to be most lacking. They have tended to be small in relation to the parent school with varying degrees of separateness from it: in some schools-within-schools, students take all of their course work within the SWAS, from its teachers; in others, they pursue a part of their studies in the larger school, or even in other schools.

Schools-within-schools have from the start tended toward one of two populations: a number have consisted of bright, interested youngsters demanding more from their educations than the conventional high school was providing (Type I). Schools-within-schools associated with such populations have often been highly innovative, exciting, challenging and demanding places. In my own Long Island area, the examples that come to mind are the school-within-a-school in Old Westbury and that in Woodmere -- which

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both continue over-subscribed and highly respected, and the two very different but equally attractive alternatives in the Scarsdale area, in Scarsdale and Edgemont High Schools. All four of these schools attract youngsters of high ability and potential -- and although some outsiders may consider their educational tastes unusual, there is no question about the status of the students or the program.

A second kind of school-within-a-school (Type II) is far more typically created from administrator perception of need than from student or teacher desire for better education. The instigation usually comes in the form of a group of underachievers, dropout-prone, and perhaps disruptive youngsters. This sort of school-within-a-school was also among the earliest alternatives, and its numbers continue to grow as a response to such varied administrative problems as enrollment declines and control difficulties. The motive in this kind of school-within-a-school is usually the solution of a problem rather than the provision of an improved education. Poor organizational arrangements have sometimes made it difficult in this kind of school-within-a-school to claim the advantages recommending the SWAS idea in the first place -- although there exist some outstanding and highly successful Type II programs.

The school-within-a-school organizational form can be combined, of course, with any number of instructional programs and emphases, so it offers significant advantages. There are schools-within-schools that are traditionalist or open, that feature specific themes, that operate full days or part days, that send their students to internships or work-study programs for part of the day, that pursue Foxfire type programs, 'walk-abouts,' and advanced placement courses. The SWAS format has been chosen for some magnet programs where existing facilities or program size have not recommended separate housing, and it has been a frequently used arrangement for alternative schools (Raywid, 1982). Its flexibility is a strong advantage, and its adaptability to various settings. SWAS programs can be set up in large schools or relatively small ones, urban, suburban, or rural, elementary or secondary schools -- and since the 60s, a large number of such programs have emerged in these various settings. Several of the contemporary reports on education seem to be recommending the SWAS arrangement, including the Goodlad, Carnegie, and Sizer studies.

The major challenge to schools-within-schools has been obtaining sufficient separateness and autonomy to permit staff to generate a distinctive environment and to carry out their own vision of schooling. There is considerable evidence suggesting that one key element of the success of alternative schools — the high morale and dedication of their staff — is due in large part to the greater professional autonomy of their teachers. If that be so, then the less the departure from normal bureaucratic practice and requirements, the smaller the gain is likely to be. Sufficient departures from conventional school organization are more difficult in the school-within-a-school arrangement than in others, such as satellite alternatives or independent programs (Rand, 1981). Building principals typically seek adherence from all personnel and units to regulations and procedures which may seriously conflict with SWAS needs. Decorum is one frequent source of difficulty, since a number of SWAS programs deliberately cultivate less formality. Scheduling is another area of difficulty, and disciplinary procedure is yet another. Although being part of a larger unit in principle facilitates sharing of resources and opportunities, in practice the arrangement is sometimes difficult and frustrating (Blank et al, 1983; Institute for Scientific Analysis, 1976; Rand, 1981). I have seen few SWAS programs whose staff find the advantages of proximity to the larger school to outweigh the disadvantages.

Ironically, the Type I programs described above — attracting able students seeking a better education — are more likely to have open admissions policies than are the Type II programs for problem students. Type I SWAS staff frequently rely heavily on self-selection in admissions, sometimes augmented by a judgment on whether an applicant seems likely to become a real member of the SWAS 'community.' Type II programs have more to lose in unwise admissions, and must frequently counter moves that would make them 'dumping grounds' for all those the larger school would like to be rid of. This puts them in a difficult position. On the one hand, parent school administration may see the school-within-a-school as existing precisely for that purpose. On the other hand, SWAS staff often take the position that no single type of program can accommodate the range of students meeting difficulty in the conventional school — and that they should be asked to deal only with those students who look like prospectively suc-

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cessful SWAS students. (Two sorts of considerations make this a particularly reasonable stance. The first is that the 'dumping ground' schools appear to be less successful than those reflecting a range of ability and motivation. The second is that Type II SWAS programs are often judged, and their fates determined, by their success rates. The 'dumping' of predictably impossible cases is thus a substantial threat.)

As this suggests, the choice provision at the core of all alternative education is often modified -- qualified and/or supplemented -- in Type II SWAS programs. On the one hand, the alternative may be limited to those students who are recommended by guidance counselors, and on the other, it may have its own entrance requirements which must be met in order for a student to be admitted. Typically the latter are largely attitudinal, and these recommendations and requirement provisions need not operate to seriously restrict individual choice. Practitioners tend to emphasize the importance of not making the alternative a forced choice or 'last chance' alternative to suspension -- since voluntariness is taken to be critical. The centrally important building of espirit de corps is tied to rendering the program attractive to its students -- a feat made all the more difficult if they are 'sentenced' to it (Graham, 1980; Wehlage, 1982).

Mini-Schools

The mini-school idea emerged from the same forebears as the SWAS concept. The original intent had been to increase personalization and participation by dividing entire schools into smaller administrative units, each with its own staff and students. As previously noted, the house or unit plan did not seek any diversity among units however, and in fact, randomized assignment and efforts at uniformity were sometimes recommended (Price, 1962; "School Within A School," 1959). As adapted by the alternatives movement in the late 60s, however, the mini-schools resulting from the division of the larger school were to deliberately cultivate diversity. In most, that differentiation pertained to instructional arrangements. Haaren High School in New York, for example, was divided into fourteen mini-schools, including College Bound, Aviation, Automotive, Work-study, Traditional, and Urban Affairs. The list accurately reflects the

two different emphases which have articulated various sets of mini-schools: one basis of differentiation has been curricular, the other has been instructional setting and approach.

Quincy Senior High School II in Quincy, Illinois, was divided into seven schools: Traditional; Flexible, featuring responsiveness to individuals via modular scheduling and otherwise; P.I.E., the Project to Individualize Education, emphasizing personal development as well as academic achievement; Fine Arts; Career; Work-study; and Special Education.

Mini-schools at the elementary level, as well as some high schools, tended to diversify primarily in terms of instructional approach or environment, rather than curriculum. Thus, a plan in Mt. Clemens, Michigan, called for dividing the high school into four mini-schools or "houses": Traditional; Comprehensive, offering a family type of setting; Challenge, based on the Walk-about idea; and Sequoyah, for those with intense academic interests. The mini-schools created in Alum Rock elementary schools included Basics, Individualized, Open, and Learn by Doing programs.

Checks with the several schools cited as illustrations suggest that the mini-school arrangement may be a less durable organizational form than others. Quincy II has reverted to a single administrative structure. Haaren was combined several years ago with another school, to form a new high school, Park West, which does retain the mini-school structure, but with new options. In Alum Rock, many of the 50 mini-school programs* were gone even before the project ended and none remained by the time the final report was written (Bass, 1978).

Are explanations identifiable? Several likely factors occur. One strong possibility is that the decision to convert to a mini-school organization is likely to be an administrative decision rather than a full staff decision. It is thus likely to represent the top-down change strategy that was associated with so many of the failures of the 60s (Berman & McLaughlin, 1975). As such, staff commitment and implementation may have remained minimal and the ensuing programs virtual "non-events," in John

*Nomenclature difficulties intrude once again: as used here, some if not all of the Alum Rock programs were schools-within-schools, since at least some occurred in buildings where the old or 'regular' program remained intact.

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Goodlad's terms (1983). Another plausible reason is that the focus on redesigning curriculum and instruction may well have ignored or underestimated the importance of general school environment and culture -- making significant, durable change unlikely (Sarason, 1971). Still another possibility is that as a top-down arrangement, mini-schools may be instituted with a lot less planning time and effort than is typically required of a single SWAS program before it is granted formal authorization to open. Planning for the original mini-schools in Alum Rock had to be completed between the end of April when the grant was awarded and June 9, when parents had to make their choices! (Levin, 1973) Sometimes recouping is possible and insufficient advance planning can be offset by the provision of sufficient staff development time and assistance. But not all mini-schools have enjoyed this sort of opportunity either.

The Rand investigation of Alum Rock, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, and Eugene, Oregon, concluded (Rand, 1981),

> Perhaps the most complex problem in a system of alternatives is managing multiprogram schools.... teachers perceive more tension and conflict in multiprogram sites than in separate-site alternatives. Our findings also suggest that an alternative has a better chance of offering a distinctive educational program if it is organized as a separate site...

Paradoxically, the solutions to the tensions and conflicts mentioned seems to be the blurring of the distinctiveness of the programs. Thus, mini-schools may be caught in a situation stacked against their full development and success.

Satellites and Separate Alternatives

Separate-site alternatives have been of two main sorts: satellites and separate schools. The two accounted for almost half of the programs responding to the 1982 alternatives survey -- 47%. Most (38%) were separate schools, with 9% satellites of other schools. The satellites are annexes with administrative ties to a parent school. The director of the alternative reports to the school principal, and resources of the parent school may remain available to students and staff in the alternative -- e.g., classes, extra-curricular activities, transportation, secretarial services. Satellites have been housed in other schools, temporary units,

and especially in the case of 'outposts' -- satellites deliberately scattered in an area in order to attract dropouts -- store fronts, warehouses, or church space.

People in individual alternatives are likely to prefer the satellite arrangement to the SWAS or mini-school structure. Separate housing permits them greater freedom in designing and carrying out their plans, and precludes the sorts of tensions and conflicts mentioned earlier. More than half the teachers in multi-program sites in both Alum Rock and Minneapolis said they would prefer to be in single-program schools (Rand, 1981) -- and if this was the case where the several programs were of generally equal status, with equal claim to prevailing in conflicts of interest, it seems reasonable to assume that a single school-within-a-school would find it even more strongly advantageous to have its own separate facilities.

Is the situation such, then, that the further removed the better? Is separate status always preferable to satellite? Not always. It may have distinct programmatic advantages for the alternative in a limited system -- but the separate alternative within an options system is sometimes subject to continuing tendencies toward fragmentation and departure from the alternative's design (Rand, 1981). Such a tendency does not seem to arise in cases where there are only one or two alternatives within the district. In such programs, staff cohesiveness and collegiality are high, usually bringing a high degree of program unity. But alternatives systems may necessarily involve teachers who are less committed and share less with their colleagues. Perhaps it is partly for this reason that investigators have spoken of the need for strong, directive site administrators in such programs.

Separate or autonomous alternative schools also risk another sort of difficulty. Without ties to a parent school they are not easily placed within a table of organization. They cannot always make themselves heard or their needs felt when resources are allocated or policies adopted, and they are typically uniquely dependent on the particular central office administrator to whom they report. If that individual is replaced, or becomes less than supportive, the alternative may be in trouble. And even given continuous administrative support, alternatives in this organizational situation have not been firmly entrenched within the district struc-

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ture. In the case of budget pullbacks or changes in board majorities, they are more visible and easier to eliminate. Thus, the increased autonomy of the separate or independent alternative may come only at the price of increased vulnerability.

Inter-district Choice Plans

The alternative, magnet, and specialty schools described in preceding sections have been offered within single school districts and made available to youngsters living within the district. However, a number of family choice programs have also been made available on an inter-district basis. This arrangement seems likely enough to become a trend to warrant special notice here.

The first inter-district schools of choice were, like other alternative schools, individual or localized efforts. In some cases, as many as eight contiguous districts agreed to the sponsorship of a single alternative school. This was the case with the Shanti School in Hartford. Many districts make their schools available to out-of-district students on an individual tuition basis; and there is precedent, particularly in the case of special education students, of districts assuming the tuition costs of enrolling a youngster in a neighboring-district program. But there is no reason why school districts could not establish arrangements comparable to the larger scale program which several hundred colleges and universities have worked out in the form of tuition exchange programs for the children of faculty. There, sending colleges sending a student to any one of the member institutions in effect get debits; admitting colleges get credits; and over a several-year period each institution must maintain a reasonable balance of trade. On a more limited geographic basis, there is no reason why comparable arrangements could not be worked out for suburban areas. And there is excellent reason why this might be highly desirable. As an example, take the schools of Long Island, New York. East of the New York City limits, Long Island is divided into two counties and a total of 134 school districts. Collectively, they enroll a total of 447,000 students, but some of these districts are extremely small and don't even maintain their own high schools. A diversified magnet program would be out of the

question within most of these districts. But why not a magnet program on a county-wide basis? And it is not just a matter of magnet possibilities: Other sorts of schools of choice are often highly distinctive. The 'localized' alternatives especially seem to take on their own quite unique personalities. Thus, two presumably comparable alternative schools in two neighboring districts may differ extensively as to school climate and culture. It might well be, then, that the alternative in the next district would appear a better fit for a particular youngster than the home district alternative. Why not a standing cross- or inter-district enrollment plan expediting the most educationally promising choices in such cases?

Here, again, desegregation concerns have provided a powerful assist in the devising of inter-district enrollment plans. In St. Louis, a plan involving the city and 23 separate suburban districts facilitates the voluntary enrollment of city minority youth in suburban, predominantly white schools. The plan is to bring black enrollments to 15-25% of population totals in the suburban schools, within five years. The city is simultaneously improving its magnet program so as to attract white suburban students.

A similar arrangement has been mandated for two Michigan school districts, Coloma and Benton Harbor, after Coloma was found liable for Benton Harbor's segregation, having permitted a number of white transfers into its schools (Mirga, 1983). Observers believe that the notion of cross-district liability may eventually lead to extensive inter-district enrollment plans, linking urban and suburban schools. And in such an event, experience has shown that arrangements offering voluntary enrollments are likely to be much more amicable, (Blank et al, 1983) as well as more effective, (Royster et al, 1979) than forced busing plans.

Several states, including Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin have adopted cross-district enrollment plans facilitating voluntary transfers that will reduce racial imbalance (McMillan, 1980). Wisconsin's seven-year-old plan has contributed to Milwaukee's segregation effort. It provides state financial incentives both to sending and receiving districts. When a student transfer from one district to another contributes to desegregation, the sending district continues to receive state aid for that student, while the receiving district is reimbursed by the state for

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the full cost of educating and transporting the student (Bennett, 1983).

Dwindling enrollments are also beginning to stimulate cross-district enrollment plans. And in any situation where there is cause to worry about community receptivity to the need for busing, schools of choice are a likely means of reducing resentments. The combination of financial austerity and demands for specialty programs may also stimulate the growth of cross-district option plans and inter-district sponsorship of single alternative programs.

CONCLUSION

Having examined the variety of family choice arrangements recently provided within public education, some concluding comments are in order regarding their merits and prospects. We shall look first at localized alternatives, then at systems of alternatives.

A great many of the dramatic achievements associated with alternative schools have occurred in programs representing the single alternative within their districts. It was, in fact, the success of such programs -- often with apathetic and dissatisfied students, and sometimes with seriously underachieving youngsters as well -- which initially recommended alternatives to many sponsors. These individual early programs often brought markedly improved student attendance and enhanced attitudes toward school and learning (Janssen, 1974; Smith, Barr, Burke, 1976). Discipline problems were substantially eliminated (Duke & Perry, 1978) and violence disappeared (Berger, 1974). Moreover, in schools where standard achievement measures could be used as grounds for comparisons -- e.g., test scores and college admissions -- they showed that alternatives students "perform at least as well as their counterparts in traditional school programs, and usually better." (Janssen, 1974) Later studies have confirmed that alternatives "typically lead to greater academic achievement on the part of their students. At least some alternatives send a substantially higher percentage of their graduates on to college than do comparable schools in the same district ... [and] ... inquiries to date suggest that alternative school graduates may outperform the others in college." (Raywid, 1981)

Such findings would suggest that 'localized' alternatives -- i.e., in districts where they are the only alternative, or perhaps one of just two

or three -- manage to provide environments and programs considerably more responsive to some students than other local schools have proved. This seems true of youngsters of varied ability and performance levels, although the evidence is of course more stunning with those who have previously been unsuccessful in school.

Comparable findings have also been associated with alternatives systems. Magnet schools present a strong case in point. They claim heightened student interest, and improved attendance and behavior records. There are staff benefits as well, with evidence of increased levels of commitment and satisfaction (Fleming, Blank et al, 1982). Moreover, since alternatives systems obviously affect more students than individual alternatives could reach, it makes sense to speak of magnet schools as a rather effective reform mechanism for improving teacher performance and the overall quality and effectiveness of schools. Additionally, and central to the focus of this paper, an options system of diversified schools can offer a range of alternatives for family choice -- whereas the existence of just one or two alternatives to the 'mainstream' school hardly assures broad responsiveness to diverse educational preferences. It also seems clear that no single alternative can respond to the diverse needs and interests of all students not well served by the conventional school. Quite possibly a range of environments and approaches is needed (Ghory, 1978). Thus, a set of magnet schools, reflecting an array of emphases, would obviously offer students more chances to find a program matching their particular needs or interests than could the availability of just one alternative to the conventional school.

From the foregoing, it might appear that alternatives systems are localized alternatives writ large, offering many of the same benefits, plus more. Such a conclusion may not be quite accurate, however. Although there is insufficient evidence for a conclusion -- and virtually no comparative findings on the two types of alternatives -- one gets the sense that the pluses in alternatives systems schools are somewhat less pronounced and the gains more modest. If so, the evidence would suggest several possible explanations. First, of course, is that not all programs within an alternatives system are fully implemented. And sometimes even the designs for differentiated programs really yield very little differen-

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tiation and departure from standard practice (Rand, 1981). In these and other cases, limited benefits may be largely a matter of insufficient organizational and structural departure from standard arrangements. This paper has throughout assumed this kind of feature to constitute the crux of the matter. Our focus has been on displaying organizational characteristics rather than the curricular and instructional features which might also be used as a basis for typologizing and exploring schools of choice. The organizational approach suggests a number of features as important to the success of alternative schools, including the choice element for students and staff, smallness, flexibility, extended as opposed to narrowly defined student and staff roles, and staff autonomy and collegiality (Blank et al, 1983; Raywid, 1982; Wehlage, 1982). These features may be more prevalent, or present in greater degree, in particular localized alternatives than in the schools comprising alternatives systems -- possibly, in some cases even due to an 'outcast' sort of status!

Where an alternatives system is adopted, at least two things happen which may reduce the success potential of individual programs. Creation of the system is a central-level decision, and the tendency may be strong to implement the alternatives according to procedures not unlike those for implementing other district-level decisions. This makes for a top-down pattern which may severely curtail the autonomy and sense of professionalized practice evident in localized alternatives. The plausibility of this explanation is underscored by the fact that in Minneapolis, the most successful of the early alternatives systems, the desire to diversify schools was paralleled by a desire for decentralized governance. (In the far less successful Alum Rock district, there was the commitment to decentralization but not to diversification.)

A second inevitable consequence of alternatives systems is to bring in those who had not and perhaps would not have been drawn to alternatives otherwise. This not only makes them lukewarm "choosers" of the particular programs they become associated with; but on the view of at least some observers, it brings in teachers who are less dedicated and perhaps less able than those affiliating with a localized alternative.

Neither localized alternatives nor those in an alternatives system are without disadvantages. Localized programs have sometimes brought stigma to

their students and staff -- from people outside who have demeaned the program, its clientele, or both. Although the evidence is mixed, there has been concern that alternatives might increase racial isolation; and family choice patterns clearly can increase socio-economic segregation within schools of choice. Accordingly, there is concern that individual alternatives may become programs for minorities and the poor, on the one hand, and programs for the elite on the other. Such concerns appear well-grounded in the case of alternatives which for well-intentioned reasons have been content with low performance levels from their students. More broadly, because a number of localized alternatives have focused on the affective and social dimensions of development, there has been concern that the cognitive has received insufficient emphasis. And outsiders have sometimes complained that the alternatives tend to molly-coddle their charges rather than forcing them simply to straighten up, conform, and produce.

Alternatives systems pose slightly different risks. Experience to date has suggested that 'skimming' may be as big a problem as 'dumping' -- i.e., there is as much danger that the optional schools will drain the ablest students out of others as there is that particular options will in effect become dumping grounds for the weakest students. Ironically, the programs most closely tied and responsive to the immediate prospects of marginal students are likely to isolate such youngsters in alternatives that become dumping grounds for the weakest. (See page 4 and footnote, page 23 for means of avoiding this.) And at the other end of the spectrum, it does quite clearly appear to be the case that it is the abler students whose parents exercise their options in choice systems. This has been fairly consistent experience across the country, from Alum Rock's alternatives (Bridge & Blackman, 1978) to New York's Open Enrollment plan (Fox, 1967).

Without doubt, parents of all socio-economic levels and of children of all ability levels can be encouraged to exercise their options. But if the system is to be equitable in this regard, careful plans and extensive efforts are necessary. Educational options are not an arrangement immediately embraced and utilized by all. And paradoxically, some of the conditions which would contribute to rendering the choice arrangement more equitable in terms of use might simultaneously limit its educational advan-

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tages. For instance, Minneapolis's four choice models which were adopted city-wide made it easier for parents to compare the alternatives, and to make an informed choice among them, than was possible among Berkeley's 23 options, or Alum Rock's 50 programs representing 10 models. Yet, such a ceiling on school innovativeness, and teachers' freedom to carry out their own visions of schooling, probably also puts a limit on the improvement potential of such an arrangement. Moreover, informed parent choice requires a stability of program that places limits on the alternative's capacity to make changes for the better.

An even more fundamental concern is raised by Albert Hirschman's examination of organizations and institutions in decline, Exit, Voice, and Loyalty (1970). He suggests that the exit option may impoverish the deserted institution in not just one but two ways: the leaver not only goes, but in choosing that course of action in preference to 'voice' -- i.e., staying and insisting on improvements -- s/he makes overall improvement within the institution less likely. Instead, then, of functioning as the discipline of market demand to force improvements, the effect may be to extend a kind of license to deteriorate even further. It is possible to construe the plight of inner city schools in just this way. Might the analysis also apply to neighborhood schools in districts offering options? This is what some have feared.

Of fundamental import of another sort is the objection that diversified schools will mean diversified learnings that will render commonality and national cohesiveness more remote. The argument for commonality has strong appeal today as prominent groups recommend an enlarged block of core courses to be taken by all students. Diversified schools are not necessarily incompatible with substantial common learnings, but the extent to which diversification can occur depends upon the way in which core, or common learnings, requirements are written. If they are mandated in the form of specific course requirements and syllabi, as so many states seem to be doing, the opportunities for responding to parent choice and student need will be sharply curtailed. There are grounds for maintaining, of course, that educationally not only are diverse means compatible with common ends -- but human diversity makes diverse means essential to the realization of common ends. A parallel case can and has been made with

respect to loyalties and sentiments: not only are pluralistic values and attachments compatible with national unity in a democratic society; they are essential to it.

Thus, the concept of diversified public schools for family choice remains a debated one. Should there be "alternatives," or should we instead continue to try to perfect a "one best system" for all? If to have alternatives, this review of the models of choice generated to date suggests that a choice of schools -- as opposed to a choice merely of teachers, curriculum, or instructional methods -- is both more meaningful and more viable. As to whether a small number of localized alternatives within a district is an arrangement that works better than a full options system, the evidence seems to suggest that each of these has the solutions to the operational problems looming largest for the other. The alternatives system has the solution to the problems of the localized alternative -- and vice versa: The single alternative school is often plagued by insecurity, and a lack of understanding and support from colleagues and administration. The alternatives system typically provides assurance in these regards but encounters difficulty in enabling schools and teachers to devise and maintain distinctive educational environments. Those with experience in either of these arrangements have much to teach -- and to learn from -- those with experience in the other.

It would appear that neither localized alternatives nor alternatives systems can provide the long-sought perfect panacea. Problems in principle and in practice attend both. Nevertheless, one is struck with the virtues of the choice arrangement and its responsiveness to present conditions. Many knowledgeable parents are already beginning to fear the probable effects of current preoccupations with excellence. Many will want something other for their youngsters than the increasingly detailed curricula and tests which states are mandating.

Moreover, when one learns that only 3% of the nation's high school students last year met the curricular recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education -- and recalls the similarity of this and other current proposals to that advocated in 1959 by James Conant as suitable only for the top 15% -- it seems likely that a great many alternatives to the 'excellence' schools will be necessary (Conant, 1959;

"Newsnotes ..." 1983). As the chancellor of New York City's schools has recently put it, we can't just throw standards out to students with the message "'Those who can, do and those who can't, won't.'" (Brown, 1983) If we are to save urban education -- and perhaps the very life of the cities -- we must be moved by dropout rates as well as by images of excellence. And as students of urban problems seem agreed, alternatives and options systems are among our greatest hopes for improvement (Chase, 1978; Levine & Estes, 1977). Nor is it just the cities and the analysts of their problems to which schools of choice appear necessary and attractive. Options have also grown steadily in suburban schools and are present in rural schools as well (Raywid, 1982). They are recognized not only as an answer for our most marginal students, but also as a source of challenging and fulfilling schooling for the ablest and the average. They are additionally perceived as a source of innovative and improved practice and a mechanism for renewal and quality enhancement. The steady proliferation of such schools suggests a real and continuing movement. Americans are evidently determined to have choice -- not just outside the public sector but developed within it as well.

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